

CHARIOT AND MOTORS AS THEATER ADJUNCTS

Some Reflections Inspired by Remarkable Success Attending Revival of "Ben-Hur."

AUTOMOBILES and theaters did not establish friendly relations in the early development of the internal combustion engine. It has been thus with the theater for many centuries. The poet of the early Greek drama found rigorous competition in the athletic games, and the chariot was then a rival as the flivver is today. Yet the theater has eventually triumphed over its more or less materialistic competitors. Shakespeare's theater managed to run when the honored sport of horse-racing threatened to gain so much social and even political influence as to put more delicate forms of entertainment in jeopardy for their very lives. Yet the philosopher will tell you that in the course of time the ruder rivals of the poet's art must become reconciled and assert themselves as dignified though subordinate contributors. Today "Ben-Hur" tours the country, a literary drama of the highest type, with the old Roman chariot properly wagoned to its transcendent star. So the automobile, whose career over level roads and through leafy avenues was expected to afford pleasure that would keep people from going to the theater, has proved itself not only a help to the play people, but an inspiration to every attaché of the thespian temple, from the managerial high priest to the terpsichorean neophyte. As the ancient sybarite was measured in large degrees for popular admiration by his chariot, and as the more modern man of worldly show was estimated by his coach and postillions, so the producing manager of the present displays his prosperity and refinements of mood by the elegance of his automobile. To the producing manager the automobile is a pet, as much as a pet as the Pom or the Pekinese of the young woman in the chorus, who hopes one day to attain a status in art which will entitle her to a motor car of her own. A moving picture star is entitled to as many autos as her salary can maintain, and that, in some notable and cherished instances, means a very great many indeed.

The practical side of the automobile's assistance to art is more important than its function as a stimulus to industry and idealism. Not only does it enable the play person to defy the elements, but it affords a tremendous impetus to the popularity of the entertainment currently offered. No reviewer, however dispassionately accurate, can convey the information given in precise mathematical terms by the vehicles pedaled in front of the theater. A great many haggard, good show. A very few signposts suggest which no smiling service can conceal. Among many other functions, the automobile has taken on the one most difficult and most important. It is your only unprejudiced and infallible critic.

Of the attractions which came to Washington this winter only two have surpassed the automobile test with any great felicity, "Abraham Lincoln" and the classic above mentioned, "Ben-Hur." "George Washington" did not pass its Monday night fiasco through out, and in New York was reviewed in terms which did not imply unqualified enthusiasm. Mr. Drinkwater says he has more plays to follow "Abraham Lincoln," but the advertisement should not arouse over-optimistic expectancy. Charles Rann Kennedy said the same thing when his mise en imagination had produced that solitary gem, "The Servant in the House." One really great play is a sufficient reward for the ambitions of a lifetime.

New York Symphony in Europe.—The entire New York Symphony Orchestra of nine musicians, under Dr. Walter Damrosch, will sail from New York April 23 on the steamer of the French line, the "Paris," the first European tour ever made by an American symphonic organization.

Dr. Damrosch has invited two distinguished native musicians to appear with the orchestra as soloists on the tour. These are Albert Spalding, violinist, and John Powell, composer-pianist.

George Engles, manager of the orchestra, who has just returned from France, Belgium and England, made final arrangements for the tour, and is chairman of the committee, which is interested in the allied governments and music lovers in the visit of the American orchestra.

For the opening concert, May 4, 6 and 8, the French government has put at Dr. Damrosch's disposal the Paris Opéra House, while the Belgian government has given the Theater Royal de la Monnaie for the concert in Brussels.

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A famous playwright of OM—Barley Campbell, the author of the famous "Ben-Hur" who was royal rainmaker when won for virtue's sake, was born in Pittsburgh, Pa., in 1844. His first literary steps were in

Amusements

Drama and Music



MARIE DRESSLER - Poli's

The popular prices of the Washington Opera Company will be maintained.

NATIONAL—Chauncey Olcott.

Tonight at the National Theater, Chauncey Olcott will open a week's engagement in "Macaulay," an Irish comedy romance in four acts by Rida Johnson Young.

Mr. Olcott will be seen as a happy-go-lucky youth, who goes out of his way to make others happy, and the character of Sir Brian Fitzgerald is said to fit him as no other in years.

A. Erlanger is sponsor for the company and production.

As in all of the Olcott plays, songs are no small part, and this year Mr. Olcott will be heard in four new ones, "That's How the Shannon Flows," "Macaulay's Anthem," "Pulse of my Heart," a love song, "I'll Miss You, Ireland, God Bless You Good-bye," and "An Irish Girl I Love, and She's Just Like You."

The company includes, Allyn Gillyn, Josie Clarin, Nellie Strong, Louise Kennedy, John Hamilton, J. Arthur O'Brien and others.

The show will be given Wednesday and Saturday.

POLI'S—"Tillie's Nightmare."

Marie Dressler, the comedienne, has returned to the stage with "Tillie's Nightmare," which she will present at Poli's Theater for this week, beginning Saturday.

"Tillie's Nightmare" is declared one of the funniest and most entertaining of musical comedies. Miss Dressler, appearing in the role of Tillie Bloeba, the boarding house drudge, who falls asleep and dreams she is Empress Josephine in Paris, where she meets representatives of all nations and settles the "peace" fight.

Sixty thousand dollars was expended in outfitting the production, and the elaborate scenic equipment forms a thing to behold in the city.

A big cast of musical comedy favorites includes John Roberts, George Gorman and John Gorman, Leslie M. Hunt, Harry Huguenot, Fanchon Marble, Marjorie McClintock, Beth Young, Marie Webb and Harry Tenney and others.

The book was written by Edgar Smith, and a Baldwin Sloane furnished the music.

There will be Thursday and Saturday matinees.

BELASCO—"Mimi."

The Shubert-Belasco Theater for this week, beginning this evening, announces as its attraction "Mimi," a new musical comedy, with book and lyrics by Adolf Philipp and Edward Gorman and with music by Adolf Philipp, whose charming melodies in "Alma" and "Adele" were large factors in the success of those notable productions.

The scenes of the two acts are laid in Paris and the plot deals with the romantic adventures of a young French girl who is the general manager of a large banking house, and an actress named Mimi who poses to him as the wife of one of his clerks, with the idea that by her charms she can advance the interests of her adopted father, who is a young clerk, who is accompanied by her parents.

The cast is exceptional in character, including Chapline, a noted Parisian, who will sing the role of Suzanne, formerly of the Gaiety and Drury Lane theaters, London.

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Automobiles

and Boso, claimed to be one of the best pantomime actors on the burlesque stage, will act as a foil. Others include May Lormer, Gertie O'Connor and Ida Emerson, as well as a chorus of twenty pretty girls.

Greater Penn Gardens. Greater Penn Gardens is offering dancers every week the pleasure of dancing on a marble and glass floor over electric lights. The management is making preparations for the opening of the open-air gardens. A special party is scheduled for Wednesday night.

CONCERTS, LECTURES, ETC.

Zimro, Palestine Ensemble. "Zimro's" six musical numbers are graduate artists of the Conservatories of Petrograd and Moscow, in the Russian musical world. "Zimro" is the only organization consisting of Jewish musicians who have attempted to

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